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Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

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I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted to the Human Rights Council pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/141, contains an overview of the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva, New York and through its country and regional human rights presences, from 1 December 2016 to 30 November 2017. It follows the thematic priorities that are reflected in the OHCHR Management Plan for the period 2014-2017. In the period under review, the Office also embarked on developing its next Management Plan, for the period 2018-2021.

2. As at 30 November 2017, OHCHR had 57 presences worldwide: 15 country or stand-alone offices; 12 regional presences; 13 human rights components of United Nations peace missions; and 17 human rights advisers embedded in United Nations country teams.

3. During the period under review, the High Commissioner conducted missions to El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Guatemala, the Holy See, Ireland, Kuwait, Libya, Luxembourg, Oman, Peru, Slovenia, Sweden, Uruguay, the United States of America, and Uzbekistan. The Deputy High Commissioner visited Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights visited Belgium, Canada, the Central African Republic, Colombia, France, Honduras, Ireland, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Somalia, South Sudan, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

4. The period under review witnessed ongoing conflicts and humanitarian crises, with civilians continuing to bear the brunt. Globally, 65 million people have been compelled to leave their homes, with 22.5 million refugees among them, of whom half are children. Minority and vulnerable groups endured persecution and violence; violations of this type also drove massive population movements. Threats to democracy and the rule of law were also witnessed, including widespread actions to undermine civil society and human rights defenders. The threats posed by terrorist groups continued to morph and increase despite some military successes against them. There were continuing attempts to consolidate nationalist and protectionist positions, entailing risks to the multilateral system of cooperation between States. At the same time, there were some encouraging developments, including citizens and movements pushing back against different forms of discrimination and hatred, extremism and populism, signalling that individuals and groups are prepared to stand up for rights and freedoms for all.

II. Thematic priorities of the Office of the High Commissioner

A. Strengthening international human rights mechanisms

1. Treaty bodies

5. OHCHR facilitated the review by the treaty bodies of 158 State party reports; the adoption of views and decisions on more than 221 individual communications; visits to 10 States by the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the issuance of seven general comments; and the initiation of eight confidential inquiries. The Office registered 297 complaints by individuals alleging violations of their human rights, but lack of adequate resources prevented timely action on them. A total of 1,274 communications were pending a decision by the treaty bodies. The Committee on Enforced Disappearances registered 442 urgent actions, of which 36 were discontinued or closed after the disappeared person was located. Webcasting of all treaty body sessions was extended to June 2018.

6. The treaty body capacity-building programme sponsored five train-the-trainers events on reporting under the treaties. State officials from some 70 States increased their knowledge and skills on the treaties and their reporting requirements. To date, more than

320 State officials from 135 States have benefited from the programme. The programme also launched a general reporting manual and trainers' guide, and is finalizing a corresponding online tool. The *OHCHR Guide on National Preventive Mechanisms (NPMs)* will be published at the outset of 2018, and trainers' guides on the covenants on civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights are under preparation.

7. During its seventy-first session, the General Assembly considered the first biennial report of the Secretary-General on the status of the human rights treaty body system pursuant to its resolution 68/268 (A/71/118), and approved additional meeting time for the treaty bodies and almost half of the corresponding staff resources that were required in the light of paragraphs 26 and 27 of that resolution. Pending the granting of the further resources, during the next biennium, treaty bodies will not be able to deliver on all of the targets contained in the resolution, making it essential to initiate the review foreseen in paragraph 41 of resolution 68/268 well before 2020.

2. Human Rights Council

8. The Human Rights Council continued its heavy workload with 140 meetings in total. The number of interactive dialogues on reports and oral updates increased. Enhanced interactive dialogues also increased from one in 2015 to three (on the human rights of migrants and the situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in South Sudan) in 2017. OHCHR supported the Human Rights Council Bureau in its efforts to address its workload in the light of the ceiling of the annual meetings that will be serviced by the United Nations Office at Geneva.

9. OHCHR continued to support the independent commissions of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and Burundi, as well as the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, including by facilitating, at the request of the latter, a workshop on sexual and gender-based violence. It is also supporting new mandates created during the period under review, including an independent, international fact-finding mission to establish the facts and circumstances of human rights violations in Myanmar, in particular in Rakhine State, and a team of international experts to collect and preserve information and to forward conclusions to the judicial authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure accountability concerning the events in the Kasai regions. Pursuant to the request of the Human Rights Council in its resolution 36/31, the High Commissioner established a group of eminent international and regional experts to monitor and report on the situation of human rights in Yemen.

10. The Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to Support the Participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the work of the Human Rights Council, administered by OHCHR, enabled 27 delegates, including 18 women from 26 countries, to attend Council sessions. Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 34/40,two briefings for delegations of least developed countries and small island developing States were held in New York, in October.

3. Universal periodic review

11. The third cycle of the universal periodic review began in May 2017. OHCHR facilitated the review of 28 Member States by the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review at its twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth sessions.

12. The Voluntary Trust Fund for Participation in the Universal Periodic Review, administered by OHCHR, enabled representatives of 15 States under review to participate in the review process. In May 2017, OHCHR initiated briefings for delegations participating in the review of their States, aiming to provide information on follow-up processes and measures for the implementation of recommendations of human rights mechanisms, in particular the universal periodic review. The briefings were welcome by Member States and non-governmental organizations, and will be offered to delegations throughout the third cycle.

13. To facilitate the follow-up on and implementation of recommendations, the Office initiated a practice of communicating with Ministers for Foreign Affairs after the adoption of review outcomes on areas deemed to require special attention. The OHCHR-

administered UPR Voluntary Fund for Financial and Technical Assistance provided financial and technical assistance for activities in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Botswana, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Iraq, Lesotho, Paraguay, the Republic of Moldova, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago. If contributions to the Voluntary Fund increase, OHCHR would be able to respond even more effectively to such requests for assistance from Member States.

4. Special procedures

14. OHCHR continued to support 44 thematic and 12 country mandates. Comprehensive information on the activities of the special procedures is contained in the report on the twenty-third annual meeting of special rapporteurs/representatives, independent experts and chairpersons of working groups of the special procedures (A/HRC/37/37 and Add.1).

5. Comprehensive follow-up to the work of human rights mechanisms

15. Multi-faceted efforts by OHCHR contributed to giving practical effect to the work of the human rights mechanisms. Efforts included supporting the establishment and work of national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up and the implementation of their recommendations. The Universal Human Rights Index was upgraded, and work proceeded on the launch of a national human rights recommendations tracking database in 2018.

16. OHCHR field presences continued to assist in establishing or strengthening national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up, including in Cape Verde, Lebanon and Papua New Guinea. OHCHR also supported the development of strategies and tools for the implementation of their recommendations, including in Argentina, Burkina Faso, Samoa and South Sudan. The Office played a key role in enhancing the engagement of civil society organizations with the mechanisms, for instance in Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Honduras, Iraq, Jamaica, Myanmar, the Republic of Korea, Trinidad and Tobago, and Tunisia, and their interaction with NMRFs, such as in Haiti, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

6. Humanitarian funds

17. The United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, administered by OHCHR, awarded grants totalling $553,000 and $7.1 million to support redress and rehabilitation for more than 37,000 victims in 32 States, and for more than 45,000 victims in 75 States, respectively. The latter fund also made emergency grants, and convened an expert workshop on torture in the context of migration to highlight the particular challenges that arise in this field, including in relation to the identification of migrants who are victims of torture, obtaining redress for violations, and ensuring access to rehabilitation.

18. The Special Fund established by the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment awarded grants amounting to $273,096 to support 11 prevention projects in nine States parties to the Optional Protocol.

B. Enhancing equality and countering discrimination

1. Discrimination against migrants

19. OHCHR enhanced its focus on the rights of people on the move and countering xenophobia against migrants, especially those in vulnerable situations. It played a key role in supporting and providing technical expertise to the consultations held in 2017 on the global compacts on safe, orderly and regular migration and on refugees. OHCHR also supported discussions in the Human Rights Council on issues relating to migration, including on large movements, unaccompanied migrant children, and climate change and migration.

20. The Office provided training, technical advice and legal expertise on migration. In addition, in September, an OHCHR team conducted a mission to El Salvador, Guatemala,

Honduras and Mexico to monitor the human rights of migrants. In follow-up to monitoring missions carried out to border and transit locations in Europe, OHCHR published *In Search of Dignity: Report on the human rights of migrants at Europe's borders*. In collaboration with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, OHCHR published a report *Detained and dehumanised: report on human rights abuses against migrants in Libya*. In West Africa, OHCHR and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) developed a joint project to address human rights violations related to irregular migration, focusing on Mali, the Niger and Senegal. In Tunisia, it launched a project on strengthening migration governance and enhancing human rights at borders. OHCHR also monitored the Manus Regional Processing Centre (run by Australia) in Papua New Guinea, and conducted advocacy with relevant counterparts.

21. The Office sought to develop to a more positive public narrative on migrants and migration. In May, it held a multi-stakeholder meeting at which more than 50 experts discussed partnerships and skills to promote inclusion and confront anti-migrant narratives. During the sixth Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights, OHCHR co-hosted a session on the issue.[1]

2. Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

22. OHCHR provided support to the Durban follow-up mechanisms, in particular the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Effective Implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Elaboration of Complementary Standards and the Working Group of Experts on People of African descent.

23. The Office continued to update its database on practical measures to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance in support of national efforts in this area. It organized a second regional meeting for Europe, Central Asia and North America within the framework of the International Decade for People of African Descent. The continued technical assistance of OHCHR to the Moldovan Equality Council contributed to its adoption of more than 50 decisions on discrimination cases. In Tunisia, OHCHR assisted the authorities to develop a bill on racial discrimination, and ensured the meaningful participation of civil society in the process.

3. Discrimination on the basis of indigenous or minority status

24. The effort made by OHCHR to combat discrimination based on indigenous or minority status included raising awareness about the importance of the protection of indigenous human rights defenders, including at the high-level event to mark the tenth anniversary of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and in various country contexts; launching a video showing how indigenous rights advocates invoked the Declaration to achieve human rights progress; on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, drawing attention to the achievements and challenges still faced in promoting and protecting minority rights; and supporting the tenth session of the Forum on Minority Issues in November 2017.

25. OHCHR also facilitated the launch of the new mandate of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and organized an expert seminar in Chile to prepare the mechanism's forthcoming study on free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples.

26. The indigenous and minorities fellowship programmes sponsored 48 advocates from 46 indigenous and minority communities. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples facilitated the participation of 94 indigenous representatives in human rights mechanisms.

27. In Cambodia, OHCHR facilitated the participation of indigenous representatives in consultations on draft legislation on agricultural land and other key issues. In the

[1] See www.ohchr.org/EN/issues/migration/pages/roleofbusiness.aspx.

Democratic Republic of the Congo, it organized two workshops with parliamentarians, the National Human Rights Commission and indigenous peoples to promote the adoption of a law to protect indigenous peoples' rights and to enhance their participation in institutions and processes. In Guatemala, it facilitated the participation of indigenous representatives in the formulation of a policy of the Office of the Attorney-General on access of indigenous peoples to justice. It supported dialogue in Paraguay aimed at drafting guidelines for indigenous women on their rights to participation and consultation, non-discrimination and land.

28. OHCHR worked with State authorities in Kyrgyzstan to increase transparency of recruitment procedures to promote equal opportunities for members of ethnic minority communities. It also gave training on minority rights, including in Myanmar and Sri Lanka; in Nepal, it launched a guidance tool on descent-based discrimination, together with United Nations and civil society partners.

4. Gender equality and women's rights

29. OHCHR pursued the integration of gender and women's rights perspectives in its work and the protection and promotion of women's human rights at various levels. At the sessions of the Human Rights Council, it organized five panel discussions in 2017 on topics ranging from maternal mortality and morbidity to the engagement of men and boys in preventing and responding to violence against women, to intersecting and multiple forms of discrimination and violence against women.

30. The Office also issued reports on ways to bridge the digital gender divide from a human rights perspective (A/HRC/35/9)and on the realization of the equal enjoyment of the right to education by every girl (A/HRC/35/11),and joined the EQUALS global partnership.[2] In collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Development Programme and UNODC, OHCHR produced a toolkit on access to justice for women. Together with the International Organization for Migration, it launched a video on unconscious bias in recruitment, to address a significant obstacle to equality and diversity.

31. The Office also conducted an independent evaluation of its regional gender advisers structure, which highlighted its unique effectiveness in achieving results at the regional level despite funding and staffing challenges.[3]

5. Discrimination on the basis of disability

32. In March 2017, OHCHR organized the annual debate of the Human Rights Council on the rights of persons with disabilities, which focused on equality and non-discrimination under article 5 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and a one-day intersessional seminar on the protection of the family and disability.

33. In Benin, efforts made by OHCHR led to the adoption of a law on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. In Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, OHCHR supported consultations on the implementation of article 33 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In Senegal, it strengthened a coalition of non-governmental organizations of persons with disabilities to engage with international human rights mechanisms. In Serbia, OHCHR facilitated the drafting of the first ever report on abuse and violence against women with disabilities in closed residential institutions, in collaboration with representatives of civil society and the national preventive mechanism. In the Transnistrian region of the Republic of Moldova, OHCHR engaged in capacity-building for more than 200 people on the rights of persons with disabilities and ways to counter discrimination against them. The Office assisted the West African

[2] Established by the International Telecommunications Union, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the International Trade Centre, GSMA and the United Nations University (see www.equals.org/).

[3] See www.ohchr.org/Documents/AboutUs/Evaluation/RegionalGenderAdvisorsStructure.pdf.

Federation of Persons with Disabilities to conduct a 10-year assessment of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by African countries.

6. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity

34. The OHCHR-led Free and Equal campaign continued to promote equal rights for and fair treatment of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons globally, reaching hundreds of millions of people through media and national-level events in Albania, Brazil, Cambodia, Cabo Verde, Guatemala, Mongolia, Peru, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine. New campaign videos and factsheets launched in 2017 helped to raise awareness of bullying of LGBTI youth and the importance of culture and tradition being open to LGBTI persons.

35. The Office issued a report containing a set of standards of conduct for business on tackling discrimination against lesbian, gay, bi, trans and intersex persons, building on the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and reflecting inputs from businesses and civil society organizations in all regions.[4] The report was launched at events in New York, Mumbai, London, Paris, Washington D.C., Hong Kong, Geneva and Melbourne. In the first 10 weeks, 42 major companies announced their support for the initiative.

36. In Haiti, OHCHR conducted training for United Nations staff members, the Haitian National Police and civil society organizations on monitoring and reporting on human rights violations related to sexual orientation.

7. Discrimination against older persons

37. OHCHR assisted the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing by, inter alia, facilitating the participation of national human rights institutions in the eighth session of the Working Group. It also organized an informal consultation in New York on promoting the human rights of older persons in business.

8. Discrimination against people with albinism

38. In Malawi, OHCHR contributed to the development of a comprehensive United Nations programme to implement recommendations of the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of human rights by persons with albinism, following the mandate holder's visit to the country.

C. Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law

1. Transitional justice

39. OHCHR facilitated dialogue on transitional justice issues. It convened a first public regional debate in South America on transitional justice, truth, reconciliation, and access to justice. In Haiti, it hosted a workshop on the fight against impunity for past crimes and transitional justice, in cooperation with domestic and international human rights organizations.

40. The Office also supported the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the truth commission became operational in 2017, pursuant to a law drafted by civil society organizations, victims and relatives, with the support of OHCHR. In Colombia, OHCHR supported the rights of victims and the establishment of judicial and non-judicial mechanisms to address serious violations of international law committed during the conflict. In the Gambia, it supported the Government's submission of a bill to the National Assembly aimed at establishing a truth and reconciliation commission. OHCHR gave technical advice on gender integration for the text, as well as on women's meaningful participation in all transitional justice processes.

[4] See www.unfe.org/standards/

41. OHCHR contributed to seeking accountability for human rights violations and reconciliation. Together with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Central African Republic, it finalized a mapping report documenting serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law committed in the Central African Republic between 2003 and 2015, providing a factual basis for transitional justice processes. In El Salvador, it trained a unit established by the Attorney General to conduct investigations into human rights violations perpetrated during the civil war. In Guatemala, the Office supported civil society and victims in the Zepur Sarco trial, which resulted in the conviction of military officials for sexual exploitation of indigenous women, and provided advice on the implementation of reparations. It assisted the establishment of specialized chambers in Tunisia to adjudicate cases of gross violations of human rights, and continued to assist civil society to monitor the transitional process and advocate for victims' rights. In follow-up to Human Rights Council resolutions on promoting reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka, OHCHR supported the Government's efforts to archive materials from the national consultations, and initiated consultations on reparations for victims of conflict-related sexual violence.

42. In Kosovo,[1] OHCHR worked closely with the International Committee of the Red Cross and authorities in Pristina and Belgrade to clarify the fate of 1,658 persons who went missing during the 1998-2000 conflict. In that context, OHCHR supported the establishment, in March 2017, of the first multiethnic resource centre on missing persons.

2. Death penalty

43. In May 2017, the Office organized an expert group meeting in Geneva on the linkages between the application of the death penalty and the right to equality and non-discrimination, and in October 2017, a high-level event at United Nations Headquarters on transparency and the death penalty. It advised and advocated with States that have retained the death penalty, notably for the establishment of a moratorium pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/176 and the implementation of international standards guaranteeing the protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, including in Belarus, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Malaysia, Mauritania, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, the United States of America and Palestine. OHCHR engaged with the Government of Maldives to urge retention of the long-standing de facto moratorium on the death penalty. It also supported the United Nations Resident Coordinators Office for Barbados and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States in hosting a seminar in September 2017 on attitudes towards the death penalty in the Caribbean.

3. Counter-terrorism and prevention of violent extremism

44. Working with the Office of Counter Terrorism, and as Chair of the Working Group on Promoting and Protecting Human Rights and the Rule of Law while Countering Terrorism of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, OHCHR moved forward with the delivery of a global human rights capacity-building project for law enforcement. Furthermore, as part of its engagement with the Task Force, it presented commissioned research on the integration of gender and women's rights perspectives into programmes on preventing and countering violent extremism.

45. OHCHR undertook a regional study on human rights and the challenges of preventing violent extremism, with reference to Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger and Senegal, recommending that basic economic and social needs be addressed and that governance in marginalized areas be improved. It participated in capacity-building initiatives, including in a joint project with UNODC for officials and civil society representatives in countries in the Lake Chad Basin. It also collaborated with UNODC in East Africa in the development of training modules on the gender dimensions of criminal justice responses to counter terrorism and to train staff of the Permanent Secretariat of the Group of Five for the Sahel to ensure respect for human rights in counter-terrorism-related projects.

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[1] All references to Kosovo in the present document should be understood in full compliance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

46. In Kosovo, OHCHR trained local stakeholders to monitor and address cases involving violations of human rights in relation to counter-terrorism. In Kyrgyzstan, it trained human rights lawyers and defenders in the context of government efforts to counter terrorism and to prevent violent extremism. In Tunisia, it assisted the National Commission on Counter-Terrorism in monitoring the implementation of the national strategy on counter-terrorism and its compliance with international human rights standards. It also supported the Directorate General for Prisons and Rehabilitation on the prevention of violent extremism in prisons.

4. Administration of justice and law enforcement

47. In 2017, OHCHR and UNODC published the *Resource book on the use of force and firearms in law enforcement* to support States in their efforts to develop and implement more effective, accountable and human rights-based law enforcement policies.[6] In Fiji, OHCHR supported police efforts to review and develop policies and strengthen internal accountability mechanisms. Advocacy by OHCHR contributed to the decision by the Government of Guatemala to withdraw the army from citizen security functions by early 2018. The Office provided substantive inputs to a conference on the use of force by law enforcement in Jamaica, organized in June 2017 by the Independent Commission of Investigations.

48. Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 30/7, OHCHR presented a report on non-discrimination and the protection of persons with increased vulnerability in situations of deprivation of liberty (A/HRC/36/28) to the Council at its thirty-sixth session. In September 2017, OHCHR co-sponsored a high-level event at the seventy-second session of the General Assembly on the theme "Torture during interrogations: illegal, immoral and ineffective". Pursuant to Council resolution 31/31, it convened a seminar in October on the implementation of effective safeguards to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment during police custody and pretrial detention.

49. OHCHR advocated for legislative enactments and reforms necessary to ensure that States comply with international human rights standards in the administration of justice, including in Honduras, Nepal and Sri Lanka. In March 2017, following sustained advocacy by OHCHR, the President of Afghanistan issued by decree a law on the prohibition of torture and the new Penal Code that both contain a definition of torture that is consistent with the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. In September, the President endorsed an annex to the said law providing for the right of victims of torture to bring claims for redress before civil and criminal courts. In Lebanon, advocacy by OHCHR contributed to the adoption of legislation to establish a national preventive mechanism and to criminalize torture.

50. In Argentina, OHCHR organized a workshop with judges to discuss the role the judiciary can play in upholding women's rights by addressing wrongful gender stereotyping. An OHCHR workshop held in Eritrea for judicial and law enforcement officials focused on the issues of arrest, pre-trial detention and administrative detention; the treatment of detainees and prisoners; investigations, fair trial and appeal; and protection and non-discrimination of persons deprived of liberty. In Saudi Arabia, OHCHR organized two training workshops on the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the Istanbul Protocol) for government and other justice and law enforcement officials, and supported the Saudi Human Rights Commission in the development of two training manuals on investigating allegations of torture.

51. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mauritania, Tunisia, among other countries, OHCHR continued to monitor detention facilities and to provide technical advice to improve conditions of detention. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, OHCHR supported 18 joint investigation teams with the military justice officials and 19 mobile court hearings aimed at facilitating victims' access to justice.

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[6] Available at www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/UseOfForceAndFirearms.pdf

52. OHCHR participated in discussions organized by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the human rights commitments made in the outcome document of the special session of the General Assembly held in 2016 on the world drug problem. It provided support to Colombia in developing a project for applying a human rights-based approach to drug policy, including the eradication and substitution of illicit crops.

D. Integrating human rights in development and the economic sphere

1. Human rights in development

53. The Office played an active role in the context of the Secretary-General's reform initiative, including by co-chairing the results group of the United Nations Development Group on the theme "Giving voice to Common values and norms" and its leadership results group, contributing to the development of the United Nations leadership model, subsequently adopted by the Development Group, and the strengthening of the Resident Coordinator accountability mechanism. It supported the development of a human rights leadership strategy under the Human Rights Working Group of the Development Group and the plan of action for the Human Rights Up Front initiative. It co-led a process that resulted in the 2017 landmark publication *Leaving no one behind: Equality and Non-Discrimination at the Heart of Sustainable Development – A Shared UN System Framework for Action.* It also supported the development and adoption of the new United Nations Development Assistance Framework Guidance and its companion pieces.

54. The Office continued its efforts to integrate all human rights, including the right to development, in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It contributed to raising public awareness on the linkages between human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals, including at the session of the high-level political forum on sustainable development held in 2017. In the context of its dialogue series on the Sustainable Development Goals and human rights, it focused on the Goals and the rights to an adequate standard of living, social security, and health. Under Goal 16, OHCHR developed methodologies for compiling data on indicators on killings and other attacks on, inter alia, human rights defenders, conflict-related deaths, and the independence of national human rights institutions.

55. OHCHR continued to promote the integration of human rights in climate action, including in the guidelines for implementation of the Paris Agreement and the negotiations of the twenty-third Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

56. Jointly with the Economic Commission for Africa and the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation, OHCHR finalized a human rights impact assessment of the Continental Free Trade Area agreement in Africa, which made recommendations on negotiation, monitoring and evaluation of the agreement, more specifically in the areas of agriculture, livelihoods and informal cross-border trade. It pursued engagement with multilateral development banks, and provided substantive input to the design of the complaints handling mechanism and public information policy of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. As part of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development, OHCHR engaged in the follow-up on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

57. OHCHR also worked to strengthen collaboration between the human rights and statistical communities in Colombia, Kenya, the Philippines, South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Palestine. It also assisted national human rights institutions and national statistical offices worldwide, including the National Bureau of Statistics and the National Human Rights Commission in Kenya, in finding ways to formalize the sharing of knowledge and collaborating on data collection, dissemination and analysis.

58. In January 2017, OHCHR trained parliamentarians from Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, the Niger, Senegal and Togo on human rights, gender and budget planning. In Palestine, OHCHR supported the formulation of a national development plan, grounded in human rights, for 2018-2021. In July 2017, OHCHR and the League of Arab

States organized a second regional conference on human rights in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Arab region.

2. Economic, social and cultural rights

59. OHCHR continued its efforts to promote and protect economic, social and cultural rights. OHCHR and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations developed an information note on the relationship between the governance of small-scale fisheries and the realization of the right to adequate food. The note explains how implementing and monitoring the right to food of such communities directly contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. In Malawi, OHCHR supported the revision of a food and nutrition bill pursuant to a recommendation made by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food (see A/HRC/25/57/Add.1).

60. The High-level Working Group on the Health and Human Rights of Women, Children and Adolescents, co-convened by OHCHR and the World Health Organization (WHO) in May 2016, issued its report, entitled "Leading the realization of human rights to health and through health", in May 2017,[7] in which it made nine recommendations spanning three areas, namely, the creation of an enabling environment, partnering with people and strengthening evidence and accountability. As a follow-up, on 21 November 2017, the organizations signed a framework of cooperation to drive implementation of the recommendations. The Office also contributed to inter-agency initiatives, such as the joint United Nations statement on ending discrimination in health-care settings,[8] and the Consolidated guideline on sexual and reproductive health and rights of women living with HIV,[9] led by WHO. It supported regional and national capacity-building sessions for civil society on utilizing the human rights mechanisms on issues related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including in East Africa and Central America, and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

61. In follow-up to its work on urbanization and the New Urban Agenda, the Office increased its collaboration with regional and local authorities. During the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context launched the "Shift" initiative with the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights and United Cities and Local Governments. Its aim is to mobilize global actors to change the perception of housing as a commodity to a human right. In the Middle East and North Africa, the already high number of forcibly displaced persons has grown exponentially in recent years owing to large-scale violence. OHCHR has developed guidance on land rights and returnees, with partners including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Norwegian Refugee Council. In Mauritania, it engaged with the World Bank on the integration of the principles of participation and non-discrimination in their joint project with the Government on the reform of land rights.

62. In Serbia, OHCHR produced a policy paper on the social implications of public procurement, particularly regarding the employment of persons with disabilities and marginalized minorities. To enable adjudication of economic social and cultural rights in courts, OHCHR Tunisia developed a manual for judges and lawyers, while OHCHR Uganda held training sessions for the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal and the High Court.

63. Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 33/20, on 7 July 2017 OHCHR convened a seminar on ways to prevent, contain and/or mitigate the detrimental impact of the damage to or destruction of cultural heritage on the enjoyment of human rights. The

[7] Available at www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/Health/ReportHLWG-humanrights-health.pdf.

[8] Available from www.who.int/mediacentre/news/statements/2017/discrimination-in-health-care/en/.

[9] Available from www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/gender_rights/srhr-women-hiv/en/.

seminar benefited from the active participation of special procedure mandate holders and members of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (A/HRC/37/29).

3. Business and human rights

64. OHCHR assisted the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises in developing a legally binding instrument. Furthermore, in November, it organized the sixth Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights, guided and chaired by the Working Group. More than 2,500 participants from some 130 countries participated in the more than 60 sessions, making it the largest global event on business and human rights ever held.

65. Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 32/10, OHCHR launched the second part of the Accountability and Remedy Project, focusing on State-based non-judicial mechanisms for access to remedy in cases of business-related human rights abuse,. The Office also sought to ensure responsible business involvement and respect for human rights in the context of mega-sporting events through its engagement in an advisory group on this topic, and advocated for corporate responsibility to respect human rights in such areas as information and communications technology, and banking and finance.

66. OHCHR provided support and training on the implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in, inter alia, Chile, Germany, Malaysia, Thailand, the United Republic of Tanzania and Viet Nam. In Madagascar, it assisted in the formulation of a tripartite charter for sustainable development and respect for human rights in the framework of private investments, involving civil society actors, local communities, the private sector and the State, and in discussions within the framework of the revision of the mining code on human rights and the exploitation of natural resources, and sector-based policy.

E. Widening the democratic space

1. Support for civil society, including human rights defenders

67. In the light of continuing and increasing attacks on civic space and public participation, OHCHR advocated for expanded civic space, the repeal of restrictive legislation and policies, an end to human rights violations against civil society actors – in particular those speaking out on such issues as sexual and reproductive health and rights, and discrimination and violence against LGTBI persons – and remedy and redress for victims.

68. Pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 33/22, OHCHR organized four regional seminars to discuss ways to realize the right to participate in public affairs, which will inform draft guidelines thereon. It intensified its work on human rights in the digital space, including by increasing its engagement on these issues, co-organizing sessions at the AI for Good Global Summit, organized by the International Telecommunication Union, on artificial intelligence and its implications for regulations, ethics, privacy and security, and participating in events with the technology industry and other stakeholders.

69. Through the Faith for Rights initiative, OHCHR has been engaging with faith-based actors to reflect on the deep connections between religions and human rights. In March 2017, theistic, non-theistic and atheistic participants in an OHCHR expert workshop adopted the Beirut Declaration and 18 commitments, which articulate how "faith" can stand up for "rights." The Declaration addresses incitement to religious hatred and the human rights responsibilities of religious leaders. In Tunisia, with technical support from OHCHR, the independent high authority for audio-visual communication developed a national barometer to monitor incitement to hatred, based on the Rabat Plan of Action (see A/HRC/22/17/Add.4, appendix). This model is being replicated in Côte d'Ivoire and Morocco.

70. With regard to the issue of protection of persons cooperating with the United Nations on human rights, while there has been some progress, the Secretary-General, in his report on cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the

field of human rights (A/HRC/36/31), referred to 39 cases of reprisals in 29 countries, the largest number ever witnessed. At the 2017 Dublin Platform on human rights defenders, held in October, OHCHR expressed serious concern at the current backlash against civil society and human rights defenders.

71. In October 2017, OHCHR and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights launched a joint action mechanism to contribute to the protection of human rights defenders in the Americas. OHCHR also supported women human rights defenders in various Middle East and North African countries in establishing a regional network.

72. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, OHCHR addressed 524 cases of threats and other human rights violations against human rights defenders, journalists and other media professionals, as well as cases of victims and witnesses of human rights violations committed during the period under review.

73. OHCHR continued to advocate for laws and mechanisms to protect human rights defenders, for instance in Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guatemala, Kenya, Mauritania, Myanmar, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Tunisia, and in Central America. In Guatemala, OHCHR provided technical assistance for the development of a public policy on attacks against human rights defenders, working with the Office of the Attorney General for the development of an internal protocol. OHCHR strengthened protection programmes for civil society, including in Brazil, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Fiji, Guatemala, Kenya, Mauritania, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Tunisia. In Burkina Faso and Togo, it provided advice to civil society actors on the creation of a mechanism and on recourse procedures. The Office provided training for civil society organizations, for instance in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, to improve public participation. It supported the National Syndicate of Tunisian Journalists in establishing a monitoring unit on the safety of journalists, whose main responsibilities are to publish reports on attacks against journalists and to provide victims with legal advice and assistance.

2. Electoral processes

74. In collaboration with the Carter Centre, OHCHR sought to bring together the electoral observation and human rights communities to strengthen a human rights-based approach to elections. At the final meeting, held in December 2017, participants endorsed a human rights and elections plan of action.

75. OHCHR worked with UN-Women and the Economic Community of West African States to facilitate greater participation of women in elections in 14 States in West and Central Africa.

76. In Afghanistan, in order to increase the participation of women in the elections to be held in 2018 as candidates, voters and staff, OHCHR produced a reference report (non-public), based on 13 country-wide consultations with 364 women and men who shared their views on factors limiting or facilitating women's participation in electoral processes, that was disseminated among government and other stakeholders.

3. Support for parliaments and national human rights institutions

77. The updated *Human Rights: A Handbook for Parliamentarians* was reissued by OHCHR and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in October 2017.

78. OHCHR provided advice and/or assistance for the establishment or strengthening of some 70 national human rights institutions, including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iceland, Kuwait, Lebanon, Madagascar, Seychelles, South Sudan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It also conducted regional activities in support of national human rights institutions, for instance with the Arab and African networks of national human rights institutions, and the Central Asia support initiative for national human rights institutions.

79. OHCHR continued to serve as the secretariat of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and its Subcommittee on Accreditation, which reviewed 28 institutions during the reporting period.

4. Human rights education and training

80. The Office supported the World Programme for Human Rights Education, which provides a global framework for action and advocacy at all levels. In November 2017, it co-organized with the Equitas International Centre for Human Rights Education and four academic partners a conference on the theme "Bridging our diversities" in Montreal, Canada, at which some 300 practitioners, scholars and defenders from more than 50 States discussed good practices and strengthening cooperation.

81. In Madagascar, OHCHR supported the creation of 10 human rights documentation centres within State institutions. In Mauritania, it assisted the Ministry for National Education to develop modules for human rights education in primary and secondary schools. In South Africa, it funded and facilitated a workshop, led by the South African Human Rights Commission, the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Justice, to develop modules for inclusive education for teachers. As a result, human rights education is to become a compulsory subject in public education. In Uganda, the Office supported the Ministry of Education and Sports and the National Curriculum Development Centre to integrate human rights into the curriculum of all secondary schools.

F. Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity

1. Human rights, peace and security

82. OHCHR efforts on peacebuilding and sustaining peace included, in September 2017, the organization, with the assistance of Sierra Leone, Costa Rica and the Netherlands, of a high-level side event of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly on sustaining peace by strengthening human rights in international law. It also briefed the Peacebuilding Commission on the situation in Burundi and Sri Lanka, and worked on peacebuilding projects in several countries supported by the Peacebuilding Fund.

83. OHCHR monitored the status of implementation of the human rights due diligence policy by the United Nations system, and continued to give advice on its implementation by United Nations partners in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan and the Sudan (Darfur).

84. The Office contributed to the pre-deployment human rights screening of proposed military personnel, and also to the design of pre-deployment human rights training for police and military personnel designated for peacekeeping missions. It continued to work with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to integrate human rights into training for civilian and uniformed peacekeepers. It delivered in-mission training of trainers on conflict-related sexual violence, directed at focal points from six peace missions,[10] in cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs and the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

85. OHCHR continued to monitor and report publicly on critical human rights concerns, including violations by security forces and armed groups. It conducted a joint study with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs that documents the positive impact of public reporting on human rights and the broader mandate of peace missions, and makes proposals for deepening this impact.

86. OHCHR also continued to strengthen its cooperation with the African Union, including by supporting the establishment of a comprehensive human rights and conduct and discipline compliance framework for African Union peace operations, and through

[10] Namely, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

joint efforts by the African Union and the United Nations to improve the integration of human rights into planning of peace operations.

2. Emergency response and early warning

87. Through its contingency fund and internal rapid deployment roster, OHCHR dispatched teams to Bangladesh, to conduct fact-finding activities on the situation of the Rohingya population in Myanmar; Angola, to undertake fact-finding on violence perpetrated in the Kasai, Democratic Republic of the Congo; Barbados, to provide advice on the integration of a rights perspective into humanitarian responses; the Congo, to conduct an assessment of the situation of human rights; Guatemala, to strengthen its country office; Mauritania, to support the country office in providing advice on a human rights-based approach to humanitarian affairs and development; and Qatar, to gather information on the impact of the Gulf crisis on human rights. OHCHR also employed its emergency capacity to conduct remote human rights monitoring of Turkey. It participated in two United Nations deployments to support the Director General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi with human rights expertise in the context of the presidential elections in Kenya, and also deployed human rights officers to Togo to assist the United Nations Resident Coordinator in the context of the political crisis.

88. In the context of the Human Rights Up Front initiative, OHCHR continued to work on the implementation of the common United Nations information management system, focusing on further developing and supporting stocktaking exercises by United Nations actors in Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Mauritânia, Somalia and Ukraine.

3. Sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking and related exploitation

89. OHCHR organized an expert panel discussion on general recommendation No. 35, adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, on gender-based violence against women, and arranged for its dissemination through video messages.

90. The Office supported the development and roll-out of the Secretary-General's strategy to improve the Organization's system-wide approach to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse, issued in March 2017 (see A/71/818). It gave advice on human rights and inputs into the main areas of the strategy, namely (a) putting the rights and dignity of victims first; (b) ending impunity; (c) engaging with civil society and external partners; and (d) improving strategic communications for education and transparency. OHCHR also contributed to the development of several policy documents, such as a United Nations policy on balancing confidentiality and accountability when receiving and handling allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, and a voluntary compact between the Secretary-General and individual Member States on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse.

91. In Guatemala, OHCHR provided training for members of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the judiciary on international human rights standards and the principle of due diligence concerning femicide and violence against women. In Haiti, the Office facilitated training for the Directorate for Civil Protection (*Direction de la protection civile*) on sexual violence in conflicts and emergency. In Tunisia, the advice and advocacy provided by OHCHR contributed to the adoption of a human rights-compliant law on the elimination of violence against women. It also supported initial efforts to implement the law – the first of its kind in the region – particularly with respect to ensuring access to justice for victims.

4. Humanitarian action

92. OHCHR actively engaged in United Nations efforts to ensure respect for international human rights and humanitarian law in crisis settings. Human rights issues were increasingly raised in the discussions held by the subsidiary bodies of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

93. OHCHR continued to integrate human rights into the overall efforts of protection clusters, humanitarian country teams and humanitarian coordinators, including in relation to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. It also continued to lead the protection cluster in

Palestine, and participated in the work of protection clusters or working groups in, inter alia, Guatemala, Haiti, Iraq, Mauritania, Mexico, Myanmar, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Somalia, Timor-Leste, Ukraine and Yemen, as well as in the Pacific region. In the wake of hurricanes Irma and Maria, OHCHR supported the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency in its recovery planning discussions with the countries affected.

94. OHCHR developed methodological guidance on the specificities of monitoring, assessing and analysing human rights in emergencies.

III. Management and administration

95. The decision of the General Assembly at the end of 2017 to apply substantial across-the-board reductions to nearly every part of the United Nations budget for the biennium 2018-2019 leaves the already chronically underfunded human rights pillar of the United Nations in a very difficult position. At the best of times, the human rights work carried out by the United Nations is severely underresourced, with OHCHR stretching itself to implement its mandate as fully as possible. With a reduction of 10 per cent in estimated requirements in most budget lines, and reaching as high as 25 per cent of the resources for the treaty bodies and special procedures, OHCHR will face difficulties in implementing many of the activities mandated by the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, and risks soon having to report on areas where it could not fulfil a mandate as requested.

96. In addition, the General Assembly, at its seventy-second main session, again deferred the proposed regional restructuring of OHCHR to its resumed session. This modest initiative is intended to bring more of the limited resources of OHCHR closer to its stakeholders at the regional level, so as to make even more effective use of them. If approved, it would be implemented from within existing resources. Savings that will accrue from the move of posts to lower-cost duty stations can be reallocated to increase outreach and technical cooperation activities. The High Commissioner hopes that the Fifth Committee will conclude its consideration of this common sense measure now, so as to equip the Office to proceed more effectively.

IV. Conclusions

97. **The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to defend universal human rights and the multilateral human rights system as an antidote to global uncertainties and existing and emerging conflicts and crises, and to act as key pillars for sustainable growth and development. During the period under review, OHCHR continued its support for the human rights mechanisms, and carried out an extensive work programme to assist States in complying with their human rights obligations. It also acted on behalf of rights-holders and victims of human rights violations, in partnership with a range of stakeholders striving to safeguard and uphold human rights.**

98. **OHCHR continues to be a global voice for equality and non-discrimination, and all human rights for all. The Office must be equipped and assisted to respond to both conflict and crisis situations, and emerging global, regional and national challenges, including with respect to ensuring human rights in the digital space, defending civic space, civil society and human rights defenders, and achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The High Commissioner hopes that Member States and other stakeholders will extend to OHCHR all possible assistance and support to enable it to carry out its mandate effectively in support of States and rights-holders worldwide.**